

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 148680

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOLLOWING REPEAT DACCA 3051 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DATED

5 JULY 1974:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3051

STADIS

DEPARTMENT PASS ISLAMABAD AND NEW DELHI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BG

SUBJ: BENGALEE INTEREST IN MUNITIONS PURCHASE

SUMMARY: WE HAVE RECEIVED WHAT APPEARS BE FORMAL REQUEST FOR
MINOR ITEM OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. SINCE LETTER ASKS WHETHER THE
PARTICULAR ITEM CAN BE SUPPLIED, WE WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S
THINKING ON SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO BANGLADESH. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED CIRCULAR LETTER FROM DIRECTORATE OF
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DEFENSE PURCHASES, MOD INQUIRING ABOUT PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF

105 MM BLANK AMMUNITION. KEY PHRASE IN BRIEF LETTER, WHICH ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SENT TO BRITISH, SOVIET, YUGOSLAV, WEST GERMAN, BULGARIAN AND HUNGARIAN MISSIONS, IS "CONFIRM WHETHER THE SUBJECT ITEM CAN BE SUPPLIED TO US OR NOT."

2. WE CAN, OF COURSE, SIMPLY REPLY SAYING WE HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING PRICE BUT CAN PROVIDE NAMES OF POSSIBLE SUPPLIERS. IN DOING SO, WE WOULD NOTE THAT TRANSACTION WOULD REQUIRE APPROVAL OF MUNITIONS CONTROL. THIS COURSE OF ACTION WOULD, HOWEVER, SIMPLY BEG QUESTION BY THIS MISSION, LEAVING DEPARTMENT TO TELL BENGALLEES IMPLICITLY THROUGH THE LICENSING PROCESS THE ANSWER TO THE CONCRETE QUESTION CONTAINED IN THE DIRECTORATE'S LETTER.

3. SINCE THE LETTER APPEARS TO BE FORMAL REQUEST, HOWEVER MINOR THE ITEM MAY BE, IT MAY BE TIME TO CONSIDER ONCE AGAIN OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE BENGALLEES. IT WOULD SEEM, IN THIS INSTANCE, THAT SILENCE ON OUR PART, IF IT IS RECOGNIZED TO BE SILENCE, WILL CONVEY IDEA TO BENGALLEES THAT WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN DOING BUSINESS IN MILITARY ITEMS. IF WE ARE TO RESPOND, HOWEVER, WE WOULD PREFER TO BE ABLE TO OFFER A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.

4. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT IF WE DECIDE TO PERMIT SUPPLY OF MILITARY ITEMS, WE SHOULD DO SO ON CASH SALES BASIS ONLY, AND SOLELY THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS, SINCE THIS WILL IMPOSE THE STRICTEST CONSTRAINTS ON BDG. OF COURSE, QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED IS WHETHER WE DO IN FACT AGREE TO THE SALE OF MILITARY ITEMS AND, IF WE AGREE, WHETHER WE PLACE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON CLASSES OF ITEMS TO BE SOLD.

5. WE ASSUME THAT BENGALLEES ARE AWARE THAT WE PERMIT SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN EVEN IF ON A RESTRICTIVE BASIS. THUS, SHOULD WE DECIDE TO DENY THEM ANY OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT, WE RISK OFFENDING BENGALLEE SENSIBILITIES REGARDING THEIR SOVEREIGN EQUALITY IN SOUTH ASIA. PERHAPS BEST COURSE WOULD BE CASE-BY-CASE DISPOSITION OF REQUESTS, GRANTING THOSE WHICH WE DEEM BEST SERVE BENGALLEES NEEDS AND REGRETFULLY REJECTING OTHERS. IN NEITHER INSTANCE WOULD WE ADDUCE OUR REASONS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS AS EARLY
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AS MAY BE POSSIBLE. IF WE ARE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE CIRCULAR, WE WILL NEED PRICE INFORMATION AND A LISTING OF US SUPPLIERS. BOSTER UNQTE KISSINGER

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